

refused to sign the final agreement in 2008, and instead escalated his attacks. Since then, the LRA has killed more than 1,000, including more than 200 on Christmas Day. The LRA has also abducted more than 450 children during this time.

A few weeks ago, concerned citizens from around the world, in more than 100 cities, participated in an event called the Rescue to raise awareness about the conflict and call on their elected officials—people here in this House of Representatives—to take action. Two of these events were held in my home State—in Wichita and Kansas City.

I'm here today to join my voice with the voices of those that participated in the Rescue and to call on Congress to support efforts to end the violence and to rebuild shattered lives.

People look to the United States to defend those who cannot help themselves, to free the oppressed, and to champion the cause of freedom. This Congress can be the voice for those who have none.

As Brandon Nimz, a student at Fort Hayes State University, who is active in raising awareness about this issue, said in a recent letter to the editor, "In this time when the world does not look very kindly toward the United States, I believe we must show everyone that we're not driven solely by a need for power and influence—we do have a heart. Even though we will receive no political or economic gains by helping these defenseless villagers in the five affected African nations, it is the right thing to do."

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, tonight let us show that America does indeed have that heart. Please join me in doing the right thing by taking action to help this conflict and protect the helpless.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

107TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I rise today because it is the 107th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Cuba. May 20, 1902.

Most people, Mr. Speaker, think that independence of the Republic of Cuba was obtained from Spain. It was not. The fight was against Spain for almost 100 years. Hundreds of thousands of he-

roic Cubans lost their lives. Then, the United States intervened to help Cuba in 1898. And this Congress was instrumental in making certain that after there was pacification—and obviously Spanish colonialism had been expelled—that the Republic of Cuba would be possible.

The United States voluntarily left Cuba. Withdrew. Granted Cuba its independence by withdrawing. May 20, 1902.

So, today is an anniversary of a very important occasion. It's a sad anniversary, because 50 years ago the Cuban Republic fell in the hands of a demented serial killer, a demonic mass murderer, Fidel Castro. And he continues to rule. He has been ill for some years and so he has granted some titles of power to his brother. But he continues to be the absolute, personal, total dictator of the totalitarian circus that oppresses the Cuban people.

There are hundreds of recognized prisoners of conscience—journalists, librarians, teachers, lawyers, physicians; people who simply have expressed their point of view that they want to see Cuba free. They're in the dungeons. And there are thousands of others who are there as well because they violated so-called laws that would not and do not exist in democratic nations. They're imprisoned for things such as dangerousness. Untold thousands thus are political prisoners in Cuba, suffering in the gulag because they have bothered that demonic mass murderer in some way, because they seek freedom, those political prisoners.

Now the system, the totalitarian system that has lasted 50 years, is rotten to the core, Mr. Speaker. Not only does it have the abject opposition, rejection of the entire people, in consensus fashion, the entire nation, but it's putrefied. It's absolutely rotten. And that system is in effect a corpse that is unburied.

So, when the dictator does finally die, that circus, that system, totalitarian, oppressive system will die with them. We have seen, in recent examples in very personalized dictatorships, whether it's Franco in Spain or Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, it's a matter of months or years. Their systems die with them. That's what we're going to see in Cuba.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a very important letter and list of signatories received just a few days ago. It was sent to the Organization of American States because there's this pathetic, grotesque effort to readmit the Cuban military dictatorship that's lasted 50 years into the inter-American system, including the Organization of American States. And 300 dissidents have signed this letter.

These are the heroes of Cuba; mostly young people, many of them wearing bracelets like this, calling for change. They're the future of Cuba. And I recommend to my colleagues and the

American people—and I will put it on my Web site—that they see the names of the future leaders of democratic Cuba.

TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

Republic of Cuba, May 15, 2009

We, members of the Cuban democratic opposition, along with our brothers in the Resistance who are exiled, consider it necessary to address you in the name of our people's sovereign democratic aspirations.

We contemplate how a call for the redemption of the longest-lived and most oppressive of Latin American dictatorships to have been raised in the Latin American region, which, as if were not enough, the Castro dictatorship itself has reviled. It is a painful contradiction for the complete normalization of all ties with this tyrannical regime and the diplomatic acceptance of despotic rule on our Island to be proposed precisely on the 50th anniversary of the advent of totalitarianism in Cuba.

Cuba has not been separated from the OAS. It is the tyrannical regime which violates the public liberties of Cubans that has been separated. It is the Cuban nation which has continued to belong to this organization in symbolic tribute to the thousands of Cubans who have paid harshly for their democratic resistance against this regime.

Nevertheless, what worries us most is not the affront which would be committed against our rights by accepting the dictatorship which oppresses us as an equal in terms of the fundamental values of its democratic neighbors, but rather the damage that would be inflicted on the hemisphere itself.

It has cost great pain and sacrifice to banish dictatorships from our Latin America. To ignore the Inter American Democratic Charter, and specifically articles 1, 2, and 3 which state:

Article 1—The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.

Article 2—The effective exercise of representative democracy is the basis for the rule of law and of the constitutional regimes of the member states of the Organization of American States.

Article 3—Essential elements of representative democracy include, inter alia, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, access to and the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law, the holding of periodic, free, and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage as an expression of the sovereignty of the people, the pluralistic system of political parties and organizations, and the separation of powers and independence of the branches of government.

To readmit the totalitarian Castro regime to the OAS would mean opening the door to every kind of future despotism for the region, and would portend grave and unpredictable consequences for the millions of human beings who are part of the Latin American community.

We ask you, in the name of the very values of civilization, not to take this step. To do so would be to lower our American democratic community to the level of totalitarian barbarism. The 1962 Resolution expresses a clear democratic principle: there can be no democratic tolerance for the institutionalized violation of human rights embodied totalitarian, Marxist-Leninist regimes.